

National Tribal Caucus: Environmental Protection for Indian Country

FY 2019 Budget Priority Guidance

In response to EPA's request for guidance from the NTC for Fiscal Year 2019 budget discussions, the NTC respectfully emphasizes the importance of upholding the federal government's trust responsibility to tribal nations to protect tribal communities and the environment on tribal lands.

As an essential priority, the NTC respectfully urges EPA to ***preserve current funding levels for all core tribal environmental programs in fulfillment of the federal trust responsibility***. The proposed 30 percent budget cut will leave many programs with insufficient staff and resources to operate effectively.

Top FY 2019 Budget Priorities

- Maintain funding for state, local, and tribal air quality programs.
- Sustain tribal funding under the Clean Water Act.
- Provide sufficient funding for tribes to conduct toxics monitoring, risk assessments, and biomonitoring studies on toxics and tribal communities.
- Preserve funds for tribal pesticide programs and support tribal efforts on integrated pest management in public housing, pesticide risk assessments, and pollinator protection.
- Support sustainable and ongoing tribal waste operations and pollution prevention solutions.
- Restore funding to the Exchange Network (EN) and determine how to support operation and maintenance costs under EN grants.

Collaboration and Leveraging Resources

- Recommit to engagement with interagency efforts, including the Interagency Task Force.
- Streamline internal EPA processes and enhance education and communication among departments.
- Promote state-tribal collaboration on tribal environmental programs.

Working Effectively with Tribes

- Safeguard from cuts or elimination all tribal environmental programs.
- Uphold the principles of EPA's 1984 Indian Policy.
- Engage in tribal consultation prior to any action that affects tribes.
- Suspend implementation of the GAP guidance and guidebook until a working group of EPA and tribal representatives can convene to develop more effective guidance provisions.

Restoring Grants

- Sustain tribal grants under sections 106 and 319 of the Clean Water Act.
- Reinstate the Superfund tax.
- Fully fund existing tribal pesticide program cooperative agreements and expand tribal pesticide program coverage.
- Restore funding for the Exchange Network program to FY 2017 levels or higher.